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Healthfirst to provide transition program for Medicare members

Healthfirst has partnered with Coordinated Behavioral Care to provide the latter's Pathway Home transition services to certain Medicare, Dual Eligible and Medicaid Advantage Plus members in the Bronx and Manhattan.

The partnership is the first with a payer for CBC's Pathway Home program.

The target population for the services will be individuals who have co-morbid medical and behavioral health conditions and recently have been hospitalized, Healthfirst and CBC said.

A Pathway Home team will initiate services during an inpatient stay and continue as individuals transition back to the community. CBC has subcontracted with another nonprofit, the Bridge, to offer eligible Healthfirst members a range of rehabilitative services, including mental health and substance-abuse treatment as well as housing, vocational training and job placement.

Dr. Ian Shaffer, vice president and executive medical director for behavioral health at Healthfirst, said in a statement that the evidence-based model will help the insurer's members manage multiple conditions.

For instance, recent data have shown that individuals who have successfully completed the Pathway Home program have higher rates of attendance at behavioral and physical health appointments as well as lower inpatient care days, according to CBC.

"It also helps individuals thrive in their communities by teaching wellness self-management techniques and fostering engagement in supportive services to sustain recovery," Shaffer said.

The partnership with Healthfirst provides an opportunity for more health plans to build in a care-transition model, said Dr. Jorge Petit, president and CEO of CBC. It is "the right model to help folks get back into the community and do well," he added.

Healthfirst's partnership with CBC is the latest in a series of recent Pathway Home program expansions.

Last month CBC said it would collaborate with the state Office of Alcohol and Substance Abuse Services to provide Pathway Home services to individuals transitioning into the community from city inpatient detoxification and rehabilitation settings. New York City Health + Hospitals' Office of Behavioral Health—in partnership with H+H-sponsored Performing Provider System OneCity Health—also said it would

launch CBC's Pathway Home program to transition adults with mental health needs from short-term inpatient treatment to an ongoing community-based setting.

"We're very excited about the continued growth of the program," Petit said. "Healthfirst is a great partner in this first venture into the managed-care world."

CBC hopes other payers will follow suit, he said, to achieve better outcomes for members as well as cost-savings.

—Jennifer Henderson